

PBS

The **Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)** is an American public broadcaster and television program distributor.^[6] It is a nonprofit organization and the most prominent provider of educational television programming to public television stations in the United States, distributing series such as *American Experience*, *America's Test Kitchen*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Arthur*, *Barney & Friends*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Downton Abbey*, *Finding Your Roots*, *Frontline*, *The Magic School Bus*, *Masterpiece Theater*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, *Nature*, *Nova*, the *PBS NewsHour*, *Reading Rainbow*, *Sesame Street*, *Teletubbies*, *Keeping up Appearances* and *This Old House*.^[7]

PBS is funded by a combination of member station dues, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Datacast, pledge drives, and donations from both private foundations and individual citizens. All proposed funding for programming is subject to a set of standards to ensure the program is free of influence from the funding source.^[8]

Since the mid-2000s, Roper Opinion Research polls commissioned by PBS have consistently placed the service as the *most-trusted national institution* in the United States.^{[4][9]} A 2016–2017 study by Nielsen Media Research found 80% of all US television households view the network's programs over the course of a year.^[1] However, PBS is not responsible for all programming carried on public television stations, a large proportion of which may come from its member stations, including WGBH-TV, WETA-TV, WNET, WTTW, WHYY-TV, Twin Cities PBS, American Public Television, and independent producers. This distinction regarding the origin of different programs on the service present a frequent source of viewer confusion.^[10]

Public Broadcasting Service

| | |
|---|--|
|  | PBS |
| Type | Non-commercial free-to-air television Public broadcaster |
| Branding | PBS |
| Country | United States |
| Availability | Nationwide U.S. southern Canada northern Mexico (OTA only) |
| Founded | November 3, 1969 by Hartford N. Gunn Jr., John Macy, James Day and Kenneth A. Christiansen |
| Slogan | "Be More" (primary) "This is PBS" (secondary) |
| Headquarters | Arlington, Virginia, U.S. |
| Key people | Paula Kerger (President and CEO) Jonathan Barzilay (COO) |
| Launch date | October 5, 1970 |

PBS has more than 350 member television stations, many owned by educational institutions, nonprofit groups both independent or affiliated with one particular local public school district or collegiate educational institution, or entities owned by or related to state government.^[5]

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| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Picture format | 1080i (HDTV) (some affiliates transmit PBS programming in 720p 16:9) |
| | 480i (SDTV) 4:3/16:9 |
| Affiliates | List of member stations |
| Official website | www.pbs.org (http://www.pbs.org/) |
| Replaced | National Educational Television (1952–1970) |
| Subsidiary | National Datacast |
| Notes | [1][2][3][4][5] |

History

PBS was established on November 3, 1969 by Hartford N. Gunn Jr. (president of WGBH), John Macy (president of CPB), James Day (last president of National Educational Television), and Kenneth A. Christiansen (chairman of the department of broadcasting at the University of Florida),^[11]

PBS began operations on October 5, 1970, taking over many of the functions of its predecessor, National Educational Television (NET), which later merged with Newark, New Jersey station WNDT to form WNET. In 1973, it merged with Educational Television Stations.^{[12][13][14]}

Immediately after public disclosure of the Watergate scandal, on May 17, 1973, the United States Senate Watergate Committee commenced proceedings; PBS broadcast the proceedings nationwide, with Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer as commentators. For seven months, nightly "gavel-to-gavel" broadcasts drew great public interest, and raised the profile of the fledgling PBS network.^[15]



PBS headquarters in Crystal City,
Arlington, Virginia

Operations

Unlike the five major commercial broadcast television networks in the United States, ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, and The CW, PBS is technically not a network, but rather a program distributor that provides television content and related services to its member stations. Each station is charged with the responsibility of programming local content such as news, interviews, cultural, and public affairs programs for their individual market or state that supplements content provided by PBS and other public television distributors.

In a television network structure, affiliates give up portions of their local advertising airtime in exchange for carrying network programming, and the network pays its affiliates a share of the revenue it earns from advertising. By contrast, PBS member stations pay fees for the shows acquired and distributed by the national organization. Under this relationship, PBS member stations have greater latitude in local scheduling than their commercial broadcasting counterparts. Scheduling of PBS-distributed series may vary greatly depending on the market. This can be a source of tension as stations seek to preserve their localism, and PBS strives to market a consistent national lineup. However, PBS has a policy of "common carriage", which requires most stations to clear the national prime time programs on a common programming schedule to market them nationally more effectively. Management at former Los Angeles member KCET cited unresolvable financial and programming disputes among its major reasons for leaving PBS after over 40 years in January 2011, although it would return to PBS in 2019.^[16]

Although PBS has a set schedule of programming, particularly in regard to its prime time schedule, member stations reserve the right to schedule PBS-distributed programming in other time slots or not clear it at all if they choose to do so; few of the service's members carry all its programming. Most PBS stations timeshift some distributed programs. Once PBS accepts a program offered for distribution, PBS, rather than the originating member station, retains exclusive rebroadcasting rights during an agreed period. Suppliers retain the right to sell the program in non-broadcast media such as DVDs, books, and sometimes PBS licensed merchandise.

In 1991, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting resumed funding for most PBS shows that debuted prior to 1977, with the exceptions of Washington Week in Review and Wall Street Week (CPB resumed funding of Washington Week in 1997).

In 1994, The Chronicle of Philanthropy released the results of the largest study on the popularity and credibility of charitable and non-profit organizations. PBS ranked as the 11th "most popular charity/non-profit in America" from over 100 charities researched in the study conducted by the industry publication, with 38.2% of Americans over the age of 12 choosing "love" and "like a lot" for PBS.^{[17][18][19][20]}

In December 2009, PBS signed up for the Nielsen ratings audience measurement reports, and began to be included in its primetime and daily "Television Index" reports, alongside the major commercial broadcast networks.^[21] In May 2011, PBS announced that it would incorporate breaks containing underwriter spots for corporate and foundation sponsors, program promotions and identification spots within four breaks placed within episodes of Nature and NOVA, airing episodes broken up into segments of up to 15 minutes, rather than airing them as straight 50- to 55-minute episodes. The strategy began that fall, with the intent to expand the in-program breaks to the remainder of the schedule if successful.^[22]

In 2011, PBS released apps for iOS and Android to allow viewing of full-length videos on mobile devices.^[23] Vern Seward The Mac Observer calls the PBS iPad App, "...cool on so many levels."^[24] An update in 2015 added Chromecast support.^[25]

On February 28, 2012, PBS partnered with AOL to launch Makers: Women Who Make America, a digital documentary series focusing on high-achieving women in male-dominated industries such as war, comedy, space, business, Hollywood and politics.^{[26][27]}

PBS initially struggled to compete with online media such as YouTube for market share. In a 2012 speech to 850 top executives from PBS stations, Senior Vice President of Digital Jason Seiken warned that PBS was in danger of being disrupted by YouTube studios such as Maker Studios. In the speech, later described as a "seminal moment" for public television,^[28] he laid out his vision for a new style of PBS digital video production. Station leadership rallied around his vision and Seiken formed PBS Digital Studios, which began producing educational but edgy videos, something Seiken called "PBS-quality with a YouTube sensibility".^[29] The studio's first hit, an auto-tuned version of the theme from one of their most famous television programs, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, was one of YouTube's 10 most viral videos of 2012.^[30] By 2013, monthly video views on PBS.org had risen from 2 million to a quarter-billion, PBS.org traffic had surpassed that of the CBS, NBC, and ABC web sites, PBSKids.org had become the dominant US children's site for video, and PBS had won more 2013 Webby Awards than any other media company in the world.^[31]

On May 8, 2013, full-length episodes of PBS' prime time, news and children's programs were made available through the Roku streaming player; programming is available on Roku as separate streaming channels for PBS and PBS Kids content.^[32] Some content is only available with a PBS Passport member benefit subscription.^[33]

Programming

The evening and primetime schedule on PBS features a diverse array of programming including fine arts (*Great Performances*); drama (*Masterpiece*, *Downton Abbey*, *American Family: Journey of Dreams*); science (*Nova*, *Nature*); history (*American Experience*, *American Masters*, *History Detectives*, *Antiques Roadshow*); music (*Austin City Limits*, *Soundstage*); public affairs (*Frontline*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Washington Week*, *Nightly Business Report*); independent films and documentaries (*P.O.V.*, *Independent Lens*); home improvement (*This Old House*); and interviews (*Amanpour & Company*, *Tavis Smiley*, *The Dick Cavett Show*). In 2012, PBS began organizing much of its prime time programming around a genre-based schedule (for example, drama series encompass the Sunday schedule, while science-related programs are featured on Wednesdays).

PBS broadcasts children's programming as part of the service's (and including content supplied by other distributors not programmed by the service, its member stations') morning and afternoon schedule. As the children's programs it distributes are intended to educate as well as entertain its target audience, PBS and its stations have long been in compliance with educational programming guidelines set by the Federal Communications Commission in response to the enactment of the Children's Television Act of 1990. Many member stations have historically also broadcast distance education and other instructional television programs, typically during daytime slots; though with the advent of digital television, which has allowed stations to carry these programs on digital subchannels in lieu of the main PBS feed or exclusively over the Internet, many member stations/networks have replaced distance education content with children's and other programming,.

Unlike its radio counterpart, National Public Radio, PBS does not have a central program production arm or news division. All of the programming carried by PBS, whether news, documentary or entertainment, is created by (or in most cases produced under contract with) other parties, such as individual member stations. Boston member WGBH-TV is one of the largest producers of educational television programming, including shows like *American Experience*, *Arthur*, *Masterpiece Theatre*, *Nova*, *Antiques Roadshow* and *Frontline*, as well as many other children's and lifestyle programs. News programs are produced by WETA-TV (PBS NewsHour) in Washington, D.C., WNET in New York City and WPBT in Miami. Newark, New Jersey/New York City member WNET produces or distributes programs such as *Secrets of the Dead*, *Nature*, and *Cyberchase*. PBS also works with other networks for programming such as CNN International for *Amanpour & Company* which is a co-production of CNN International and WNET.

PBS member stations are known for rebroadcasting British television costume dramas, comedies and science fiction programs (acquired from the BBC and other sources) such as *Downton Abbey*; *'Allo 'Allo!*; *Are You Being Served?*; *The Benny Hill Show*, *Red Dwarf*; *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*; *Father Ted*; *Fawlty Towers*; *Harry Enfield and Chums*; *Keeping Up Appearances*; *Monty Python's Flying Circus*; *Mr. Bean*, *The Vicar of Dibley*, *Doctor Who*, and *Sherlock*; consequently, this has led to jocular references that the service's name stands for "Primarily British Series". However, a significant amount of sharing takes place. The BBC and British broadcasters such as Channel 4 often cooperate with PBS stations, producing material that is shown on both sides of the Atlantic. Less frequently, Canadian, Australian and other international programming appears on PBS stations (such as *The Red*

Green Show, currently distributed by syndicator Executive Program Services); public broadcasting syndicators are more likely to offer this programming to U.S.-based public television stations.

PBS is not the only distributor of public television programming to the member stations. Other distributors have emerged from the roots of companies that maintained loosely held regional public television stations in the 1960s. Boston-based American Public Television (which, among other names, was formerly known as Eastern Educational Network and the American Program Service) is second only to PBS for distributing programs to U.S. non-commercial stations. Another distributor is NETA (formerly SECA), whose properties have included *The Shapies* and *Jerry Yarnell School of Fine Art*. In addition, the member stations themselves also produce a variety of local shows, some of which subsequently receive national distribution through PBS or other distributors.

Rerun programming, especially domestic programming not originally produced for public television, is generally uncommon on PBS or its member stations. The most prominent exception to this is *The Lawrence Welk Show*, which has aired continuously in reruns on PBS (through the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority) almost every weekend since 1986. Reruns of programs originally produced for public television are common, especially with former PBS shows whose hosts have retired or died (for example, *The Joy of Painting* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*). Children's programming (such as *Clifford the Big Red Dog* and *DragonflyTV*, the latter of which is also syndicated on commercial television) is rerun extensively.

PBS Kids

Launched as PTV on July 11, 1994, PBS Kids is the brand for children's programs aired by PBS. The PBS Kids Channel, launched in 1999 and operated until 2005, was largely funded by satellite provider DirecTV. The channel ceased operations on September 26, 2005, in favor of PBS Kids Sprout, a commercial digital cable and satellite television channel originally operated as a joint venture with Comcast, Sesame Workshop and Apax Partners (NBCUniversal, which Comcast acquired in 2011, later acquired the other partners' interests in the channel in 2012). However, the original programming block still exists on PBS, filling daytime and in some cases, weekend morning schedules on its member stations; many members also carry 24-hour locally programmed children's networks featuring PBS Kids content on one of their digital subchannels. A revived version of the PBS Kids Channel was launched on January 16, 2017. As of 2019, PBS Kids is the only children's programming block on U.S. broadcast television.

As PBS is often known for doing, PBS Kids has broadcast imported series from other countries; these include British series originally broadcast by the BBC and ITV. Through American Public Television, many PBS stations also began airing the Australian series *Raggs* on June 4, 2007. Some of the programs broadcast as part of the service's children's lineup or through public broadcast syndication directly to its members have subsequently been syndicated to commercial television outlets (such as *Ghostwriter* and *The Magic School Bus*).

Sports

Many PBS member stations and networks – including Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MHSAA), Georgia Public Broadcasting (GHSAA), Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPA), Iowa Public Television (IGHSAU), Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NSAA), and WKYU-TV (Western Kentucky Hilltoppers) – locally broadcast high school and college sports. From the 1980s onward, the national PBS network has not typically carried sporting events, mainly because the broadcast rights to most sporting events have become more cost-prohibitive in that timeframe, especially for nonprofits with limited revenue potential; in addition, starting with the respective launches of the MountainWest Sports Network (now defunct) and Big Ten Network in 2006 and 2007 and the later launches of the Pac-12 Network and ESPN's SEC Network and ACC Network, athletic conferences have acquired rights for all of their member university's sports programs for their cable channels, restricting their use from PBS member stations, even those associated with their own universities.

From 1976 to 1989, KQED produced a series of Bundesliga matches under the banner Soccer Made in Germany, with Toby Charles announcing. PBS also carried tennis events, as well as Ivy League football. Notable football commentators included Upton Bell, Marty Glickman, Bob Casciola, Brian Dowling, Sean McDonough and Jack Corrigan.^[34] Other sports programs included interview series such as The Way It Was and The Sporting Life.^[35]

Governance

The board of directors is responsible for governing and setting policy for PBS, consisting of 27 members: 14 professional directors (station managers), 12 general directors (outside directors), and the PBS president.^[36] All PBS Board members serve three-year terms, without pay.^[36] PBS member stations elect the 14 professional directors; the board elects the 12 general directors and appoints the PBS president and CEO; and the entire board elects its officers.^[37]

Member stations

As of March 2015, PBS maintains current memberships with 354 television stations encompassing 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. possessions;^{[5][38]} as such, it is the only television broadcaster in the United States – commercial or non-commercial – which has station partners licensed in every U.S. state (by comparison, none of the five major commercial broadcast networks has affiliates in certain states where PBS has members, most notably New Jersey). The service has an estimated national reach of 93.74% of all households in the United States (or 292,926,047 Americans with at least one television set).

PBS stations are commonly operated by nonprofit organizations, state agencies, local authorities (such as municipal boards of education), or universities in their city of license; this is similar (albeit more centralized in states where a licensee owns multiple stations rebroadcasting the main PBS member) to the early model of commercial broadcasting in the U.S., in which network-affiliated stations were initially owned by companies that owned few to no other television stations elsewhere in the country. In some U.S. states, a group of PBS stations throughout the entire state may be organized into a single regional "subnetwork" (such as Alabama Public Television and the Arkansas Educational Television Network); in this model, PBS programming and other content is distributed by the originating station in the subnetwork to other full-power stations that serve as satellites as well as any low-power translators in other areas of the state. Some states may be served by such a regional network and simultaneously have PBS member stations in a certain city (such as the case with secondary member KBDI-TV in Denver, which is not related to Colorado member network Rocky Mountain PBS and its flagship station and primary Denver PBS member, KRMA-TV) that operate autonomously from the regional member network.

As opposed to the present commercial broadcasting model in which network programs are often carried exclusively on one television station in a given market, PBS may maintain more than one member station in certain markets, which may be owned by the licensee of the market's primary PBS member station or owned by a separate licensee (as a prime example, KOCE-TV, KLCS and KVCR-DT – which are all individually owned – serve as PBS stations for the Los Angeles market; KCET served as the market's primary PBS member until it left the service in January 2011,^[39] at which time it was replaced by KOCE). KCET rejoined PBS in 2019, thus giving the Los Angeles area four different member stations.

For these cases, PBS utilizes the Program Differentiation Plan, which divides by percentage the amount of programs distributed by the service that each member can carry on their schedule; often, this assigns a larger proportion of PBS-distributed programming to the primary member station, with the secondary members being allowed to carry a lesser amount of program offerings from the service's schedule. Unlike public broadcasters in most other countries, PBS cannot own any of the stations that broadcasts its programming; therefore it is one of the few television programming bodies that does not have any owned-and-operated stations. This is partly due to the origins of the PBS stations themselves, and partly due to historical broadcast license issues.

Participating stations

Most PBS member stations have produced at least some nationally distributed programs. Current regularly scheduled programming on the PBS national feed is produced by a smaller group of stations, including:

- WGBH-TV (Arthur, NOVA, Masterpiece, Frontline, etc.)
- WNET (Nature, PBS NewsHour Weekend, Cyberchase, Amanpour & Company etc.)
- WETA-TV (PBS NewsHour, Washington Week, A Capitol Fourth (annually), etc.)
- WTTW (Nature Cat, WordWorld)

- Maryland Public Television (*MotorWeek*)
- KLRU (*Austin City Limits*)
- KOCE-TV (*Sid the Science Kid*)
- KQED (*The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!*)
- Oregon Public Broadcasting (*History Detectives*, *Rick Steves' Europe* (season 10))
- UNC-TV (*The Woodwright's Shop*)
- South Carolina ETV (*The Magic School Bus*, *A Chef's Life*)
- WQED (*Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*)
- Twin Cities Public Television (KTCA/KTCI) (*Newton's Apple*, *SciGirls*)
- KCTS-TV (*Rick Steves' Europe*)

PBS networks

| Network | Notes |
|--|---|
|  <u>PBS Kids</u> | A programming block that has children's TV shows. The block was formerly called PTV Park. Launched as a 24/7 network in 1999 that was dissolved in 2005 and subsequently revived in 2017. |
|  <u>PBS Kids Go!</u> | A former programming block of <u>PBS Kids</u> . This block was for 6-13-year-olds. A 24/7 network was announced in 2006 but never launched due to financial issues. |
| <u>PBS HD</u> | A high-definition programming feed available to PBS' member stations. |
| <u>PBS Satellite Service</u> | A 24-hour alternate network feed that provides a mixed variety of programming selected from the main PBS service, as well as for carriage on programming tiers of satellite providers. |

PBS has spun off a number of television networks, often in partnership with other media companies. PBS YOU, a distance education and how-to service operated until January 2006, and was largely succeeded by Create (a similarly formatted network owned by American Public Television); PBS Kids Channel was superseded by Sprout at the start of October 2005. The PBS Kids Channel relaunched January 16, 2017. World began operations in 2007 as a service operated by PBS but is now managed by American Public Television.

PBS has also restructured its satellite feed system, simplifying HD02 (PBS West) into a timeshift feed for the Pacific Time Zone, rather than a high-definition complement to its formerly primary SD feed. PBS Kids Go! was proposed as a replacement broadcast network for PBS Kids Channel, however, plans to launch the network were folded in 2006. Programming from the PBS Satellite Service has also been carried by certain member stations or regional member networks to fill their overnight schedules (particularly those that have transitioned to a 24-hour schedule since the late 1990s), in lieu of providing programming sourced from outside public television distributors or repeats of local programming (program promotions shown on the satellite feed advertise upcoming programs as being aired on PBS during the timeslot card normally used as a placeholder for member outlets to insert local airtime information).

Some or all of these services are available on a digital cable tier of many cable providers, on a free-to-air (FTA) satellite receiver receiving from PBS Satellite Service, as well as via subscription-based direct broadcast satellite providers. With the exception of Sprout, some of these services, including those from PBS member stations and networks, have not made contracts with Internet-distributed over-the-top MVPD services such as PlayStation Vue and Sling TV. With the transition to over-the-air digital television broadcasts, many of the services are also often now available as standard-definition multicast channels on the digital signals of some member stations, while HD02 (PBS West) serves as a secondary HD feed. With the absence of advertising, network identification on these PBS networks was limited to utilization at the end of the program, which includes the standard series of bumpers from the "Be More" campaign.

At the summer 2019 Television Critics Association press tour day for PBS on July 29, 2019, it was announced that MVPD YouTube TV would begin to carry PBS programming and member stations in the fall of 2019. Member stations have the choice of having their traditional channel on the service with its full programming schedule received by Google over-the-air and uploaded to the service, a YouTube TV-only feed provided by the station with some programming substitutions due to lack of digital rights, or a PBS-provided feed with limited localization, though with no local programming or pledge drive programming.^[40]

Independent networks

While not operated or controlled by PBS proper, additional public broadcasting networks are available and carried by PBS member stations.

| Channel | Programming | Origin |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Create | Educational and artistic programming | American Public Television |
| World | News and documentaries | |
| First Nations Experience | Indigenous programming | San Bernardino Community College District |

From 2002 to 2011, Buffalo, New York member station WNED-TV operated ThinkBright TV, a service that was carried on several stations in upstate New York. Several state networks also offer a public affairs subchannel network offering full-time coverage of state government events and legislative/judicial proceedings in the same vein as C-SPAN's coverage of the federal government. Many PBS stations also carried MHz Worldview from the MHz Networks until 2020 when MHz Networks announced its discontinuation of the network on March 1, 2020. Since then, many stations has switched to World Channel as well as First Nations Experience.

A separate but related concept is the state network, where a group of stations across a state simulcast a single programming schedule from a central facility, which may include specialty subchannels unique to that broadcaster.

Visual identity

PBS introduced its first iconographic logo in 1971, a multi-colored wordmark of the network's initials with the P designed to resemble a silhouette of a human face. The logo was designed by Ernie Smith and Herb Lubalin of the Lubalin Smith Carnase design firm.^{[41][42]} Lubalin's human face "P", known internally at PBS as "Everyman", but more commonly known as the "P-Head", became the basis for all subsequent PBS logos.^[43]

In 1984, PBS introduced a new version of the logo, designed by Tom Geismar of Chermayeff & Geismar.^[44] Chermayeff & Geismar felt that the Lubalin-designed logo was too similar to those of the three dominant commercial networks of the time, and they sought "to develop a symbol that could stand for the more inclusive concept of 'public television'". They inverted Lubalin's Everyman "P" to face to the right instead of the left, and repeated the outline as a series to represent a "multitude" of people. The symbol was subsequently renamed "Everyone".^[43] The repeated outline of the face has also been interpreted to suggest a degree of multiculturalism, as well as the public service aspect of the PBS mission.^[45]

The logo has been used in various forms since: from 1998 onward, the Geismar logo has been rendered in white on a circle.^[43]

On November 4, 2019, in honor of the network's 50th anniversary, PBS unveiled a redesign of its identity by Lippincott. The identity is intended to be better-suited for use on digital platforms, and includes a tweaked version of the Geismar logo, adoption of electric blue and white as corporate colors, and a new custom sans-serif typeface used in communications and inspired by the new custom logotype (which replaces the slab serif typeface used in the PBS logo since 1984).^{[46][47]} The network is allowing flexibility in implementation (including members re-branding to include PBS in their name for the first time, such as Wisconsin Public



PBS's second logo, the first iteration to include the "P-Head" element.



PBS's third logo, as used from 1984 to 2019. The logo pictured is the 2002 version.

Television rebranding as PBS Wisconsin), but is no longer allowing the logo to be displayed independently of the PBS name.^{[47][48]} PBS is paying out grants to at least 100 members to cover costs associated with the rebranding.^[47]

Criticism, controversy, and reception

Critical response

PBS has received some positive reviews from television critics. Tim Goodman of The Hollywood Reporter wrote, "It's PBS's time to shine."^[49] Stevenonymous of BuzzFeed wrote, "PBS isn't just TV anymore."^[50] David Zurawik of the Baltimore Sun wrote, "If you want a reason to believe in PBS...here it is."^[51] Mekeisha Madden Toby of TheWrap wrote, "There is a lot to love...on PBS."^[52] Tim Goodman of The Hollywood Reporter wrote, "PBS...is an endless bounty of riches...Ain't this great?."^[53] Kristen McQuinn of Book Riot wrote, "PBS is awesome in every way."^[54] Caroline Framke of Variety wrote, "There's still no beating PBS."^[55]

On-air fundraising

Since 53% to 60% of public television's revenues come from private membership donations and grants,^[56] most stations solicit individual donations by methods including fundraising, pledge drives or telethons, which disrupt regularly scheduled programming. This has been perceived as potentially annoying since regularly scheduled programming is often replaced with specials aimed at a wider audience (such as music specials aimed at the Baby Boomer generation and financial, health and motivational programs) to solicit new members and donations; during fundraising events, these programs are often interrupted within the broadcast by long-form segments (of six to eight minutes in length) encouraging viewers to donate to their PBS member.^[57] Underwriting spots are aired at the end of each program, which differ from traditional commercials in several ways.^[58] Each spot must be approved to meet several guidelines.^[59] The main guidelines state that underwriting spots cannot be qualitative in any way, nor can they have any call to action.^[60]

Accusations of political/ideological bias

A 1982 broadcast of the United States Information Agency program Let Poland be Poland about the martial law declared in Poland in 1981 was widely viewed in the U.S., but met with skepticism on the part of eastern European broadcasters (communist countries at the time) due to concerns that the program's "provocative and anticommunist" tone was intended as propaganda.^{[61][62]}

In 1999, at least three public television stations were caught selling or trading their mailing lists with the Democratic National Committee. Under IRS regulations, nonprofit organizations are prohibited from participating in political actions. Officials from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting condemned the practice and conducted an investigation into the matter. The stations involved were in New York, Boston, and Washington.^[63]

Individual programs aired by PBS have been the targets of organized campaigns by individuals and groups with opposing views, including former United States Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.^[64]

Bill Moyers resigned in 2005 after more than three decades as a PBS regular, citing political pressure to alter the content of his program and saying Chairman of the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Kenneth Tomlinson had mounted a "vendetta" against him.^[65] Moyers eventually returned to host Bill Moyers Journal, after Tomlinson's resignation from CPB. Subsequently, PBS made room temporarily for rightwing commentator Tucker Carlson, formerly of MSNBC and co-host of CNN's Crossfire, and The Journal Editorial Report with Paul Gigot, an editor of The Wall Street Journal editorial page (this program has since moved to Fox News Channel) to partially balance out the perceived left-leaning PBS shows.^[66]

Lawsuit with Pacific Arts

In the 1990s, PBS became involved in a dispute over home video licensing rights with Pacific Arts Corporation, a multimedia company owned and operated by former Monkees guitarist Michael Nesmith.

In 1990, Pacific Arts secured a contract with PBS to distribute their back catalog of programming on VHS under the PBS Home Video banner. However, in the early 1990s, Pacific Arts and PBS went through a series of serious disagreements. Lawsuits were filed: by Nesmith and Pacific Arts against PBS for breach of contract, intentional misrepresentation, intentional concealment, negligent misrepresentation, and interference with contract; and by PBS against Nesmith and Pacific Arts for lost royalties.^[67] The lawsuits escalated in 1994 and 1995 into major litigation between the parties over these rights and payments. PBS and Nesmith and Pacific Arts vigorously prosecuted these multimillion-dollar counter-suits.

The six plaintiffs included PBS, WGBH, WNET, the Ken Burns-owned American Documentaries and Radio Pioneers Film Project and the Children's Television Workshop. They sought approximately \$5 million in disputed royalties, advances, guarantees and license fees for programs and the use of the PBS logo from the defendants Pacific Arts and Nesmith.

Due to the cost of the litigation, Pacific Arts was forced to cease distribution operations and suspended the use of the PBS logo on the Pacific Arts videos.^[67] Though Pacific Arts distribution system had ceased operating, the various plaintiffs were counting on capturing a personal financial guarantee Nesmith had made to PBS in the original PBS deal in 1990.

The cases went to jury trial in Federal Court in Los Angeles in February 1999. After three days of deliberation, the jury unanimously sided with Nesmith.^[68] The court awarded Pacific Arts \$14,625,000 for loss of its rights library, plus \$29,250,000 in punitive damages. The jury

awarded \$3 million to Nesmith personally, including \$2 million in punitive damages for a total award to Nesmith and Pacific Arts of \$48,875,000. The jury resolved the outstanding license fee issues by ordering Pacific Arts and Nesmith to pay approximately \$1.2 million to American Documentaries for *The Civil War*, about \$230,000 to WGBH, and \$150,000 to WNET.^[67]

Following the ruling, Nesmith expressed his personal disappointment with PBS and was quoted by BBC News as stating "It's like finding your grandmother stealing your stereo. You're happy to get your stereo back, but it's sad to find out your grandmother is a thief."^[69]

The decision never went to an appeals court and the final amount paid to Pacific Arts and Nesmith was an undisclosed sum agreed to in an out-of-court settlement.

Warning, Alert and Response Network (WARN)

PBS provides an alternate path for WEA alerts to wireless carriers. The alerts are transmitted through the PBS satellite network on the AMC-21 satellite to PBS stations who broadcast the messages over their transmitters for reception by wireless carriers at their cell sites.^{[70][71]}

The network is funded by a grant through National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).^[70]

See also

- [American Public Media](#)
- [American Public Television](#)
- [Instructional television](#)
- [List of United States over-the-air television networks](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [PBS America](#)
- [PBS Digital Studios](#)
- [PBS HD Channel](#)
- [PBS logos](#)
- [Public broadcasting](#)
- [Public Radio International](#)
- [Public, educational, and government access \(PEG\)](#)
- [Ralph Lowell Award](#)^[72]
- [Television in the United States](#)
- [List of PBS member stations](#)

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External links

- [Official website](http://www.pbs.org) (<http://www.pbs.org>) 
- [PBS](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) (<https://www.facebook.com/pbs>) on [Facebook](#)
- [PBS](https://twitter.com/pbs) (<https://twitter.com/pbs>) on [Twitter](#)
- [PBS's channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/PBS) (<https://www.youtube.com/user/PBS>) on [YouTube](#)
- [PBS "Red Book"](https://www.pbs.org/producers/redbook/index.html) (<https://www.pbs.org/producers/redbook/index.html>) (presentation guidelines for PBS programming)
- [Video interview with PBS President Paula Kerger](https://web.archive.org/web/20080814023828/http://www.wpt.org/blog/2008/07/wpt-be-more-tuned-in-video-cast-pbs_31.html) (https://web.archive.org/web/20080814023828/http://www.wpt.org/blog/2008/07/wpt-be-more-tuned-in-video-cast-pbs_31.html)
- [Current](http://www.current.org) (<http://www.current.org>), the newspaper about public TV and radio in the United States
- [Designing Healthy Communities by PBS](https://web.archive.org/web/20170104174846/http://designinghealthycommunities.org/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170104174846/http://designinghealthycommunities.org/>)

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